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RUEA IIA/CIA WASHDC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000313

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AF/S FOR S. HILL  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS  
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/10/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: SITUATION REPORT: MDC REJECTS RECOUNT, LOOKS TO  
LUSAKA

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Ten days after Zimbabwe's national elections, with results of the presidential contest still outstanding, the Ambassador confirmed the intention of MDC presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai, currently in Botswana, to travel with President Khama to Lusaka for the April 12-13 emergency SADC summit on Zimbabwe. On April 9, MDC Secretary General Tendai Biti held a press conference to denounce reports in the government newspaper that the MDC would consider a government of national unity or a vice-presidential spot for Tsvangirai. Biti reiterated his call to the international community to intervene in advance of an outbreak of violence. He went on to raise concerns on three main issues: a possible unlawful recount, discrediting of the MDC though forged documents and the militarization of a runoff by ZANU-PF. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) As Zimbabwe continues to wait for results of the March 29 presidential election, the Ambassador confirmed with Morgan Tsvangirai on April 10 that the opposition candidate was in Gaborone, Botswana and planned to travel to the April 12-13 extraordinary SADC summit on Zimbabwe in Lusaka with Botswana's new president, Seretse Ian Khama. Tsvangirai intended to return to Zimbabwe following the summit. Tsvangirai told the Ambassador that MDC Secretary General

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Tendai Biti planned to travel to South Africa over the weekend to appeal to diaspora MDC backers for additional financial assistance.

13. (SBU) In an April 9 press conference, Biti denied reports in the government mouthpiece, The Herald, that the MDC would consider a government of national unity or a vice-presidential spot for MDC presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai. Biti reiterated the MDC's stance that Tsvangirai

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had won the election outright and again called on the international community to intervene. He implored SADC, the African Union and Western nations "not to wait for dead bodies to litter the streets" of Harare and Bulawayo. Biti went on to raise concerns on three main issues. First, he noted that ten days after the March 29 election, with results still outstanding, ZANU-PF, according to The Herald, had called for a recount of 21 parliamentary constituencies and portions of the presidential vote. Biti remarked that this was proof that ZANU-PF had "opened ballot boxes, moved ballot boxes and knows what's inside;" he stated the MDC would categorically reject any recount as outside the law. Biti noted that the constitution does not provide for a recount in a presidential election, and provides for a parliamentary recount only if requested within 48 hours of declaration of results. (NOTE: The April 10 edition of The Herald reports that ZANU-PF did raise concerns over the 21 constituencies with the electoral commission within the statutory 48 hours; this has not been independently confirmed. END NOTE.)

14. (SBU) Second, Biti accused ZANU-PF's Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) of forging and releasing an inflammatory MDC "Transition Strategy", allegedly authored by Biti, a copy of which was distributed at the press conference. Among other conspiracy-driven items, the document called for inviting Western leaders, including President Bush "and other key stakeholders in the People's Project," to Morgan Tsvangirai's March 31 or April 1 inauguration; as well as for

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the dissolution of the security sector and the replacement of senior military officers with former members of the Rhodesian Security Forces. Biti denied having prepared any such plan. (NOTE: Reserve Bank Governor Gono had sent the Ambassador a copy of this document on 3 April, claiming it was a product of the MDC that had been "discovered" by the CIO. END NOTE.)

15. (C) Third, Biti reported on the widespread

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"militarization" of all of Zimbabwe's provinces, particularly in those areas where the MDC reportedly did well during the March 29 contest. Biti stated that the Mugabe regime, as part of a systematic campaign of violence and intimidation, had divided responsibility for each region among 207 mostly senior military officers, who were each responsible for commanding war veterans to secure support for Mugabe in a runoff. The officials and their respective locations were named in another document distributed by the MDC during the press conference. According to the MDC, the teams were to be deployed on April 8. (NOTE: This deployment date tracks with an uptick in violence perpetrated in rural areas by war veterans and security forces, as reported by local NGOs (septel). END NOTE.)

16. (C) The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) has reportedly closed its command center -- the location provided for the tallying of votes from the March 29 elections -- adding to anxiety among opposition and civil society members in Harare. Though rumors that ZEC has been moved to a "secret" location have been dispelled (ZEC appears to have returned to work in its regular offices), we have heard reports that the location of the ballot boxes remains unknown. According to ZEC's deputy director, technical delays in counting results continue and the commission is not yet ready for the verification phase, during which party agents are allowed to observe, to begin. Commenting on the arrest of ZEC officials and other polling agents for incorrect completion of forms, the deputy director suggested that it would have been appropriate for ZEC to have conducted an internal investigation before the police became involved. The deputy confirmed that there would be a recount in the constituencies in question by ZANU-PF, and that party agents and observers would be allowed to be present, information that tracked with The Herald's April 10 edition.

